

(3) evaluate opportunities to resolve the issues referred to in paragraph (2); and

(4) evaluate options for implementation of resolutions to the issues.

(c) REQUIREMENTS.—Because of the regional and international impact of the regional feasibility study, the study may not be segmented. The regional study shall—

(1) utilize, to the maximum extent possible, existing information; and

(2) be planned and conducted in consultation with all affected interests, including interests in Canada.

SEC. 204. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR FEASIBILITY STUDIES.

(a) FISCAL YEAR 1999 APPROPRIATIONS.—Of the amounts made available by appropriations for fiscal year 1999 for the Bureau of Reclamation, \$1,000,000 shall be used for the purpose of commencing the MR&I feasibility study under section 202 and the regional study under section 203, of which—

(1) \$500,000 shall be used for the MR&I study under section 202; and

(2) \$500,000 shall be used for the regional study under section 203.

(b) FEASIBILITY STUDIES.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Department of the Interior, for the Bureau of Reclamation, for the purpose of conducting the MR&I feasibility study under section 202 and the regional study under section 203, \$3,000,000 for fiscal year 2000, of which—

(1) \$500,000 shall be used for the MR&I feasibility study under section 202; and

(2) \$2,500,000 shall be used for the regional study under section 203.

(c) WITHOUT FISCAL YEAR LIMITATION.—All money appropriated pursuant to authorizations under this title shall be available without fiscal year limitation.

(d) AVAILABILITY OF CERTAIN MONEYS.—The amounts made available for use under subsection (a) shall be deemed to have been available for use as of the date on which those funds were appropriated. The amounts authorized to be appropriated in subsection (b) shall be available for use immediately upon appropriation.

FREEDOM TO E-FILE ACT

FITZGERALD AMENDMENT NO. 2513

Mr. GRASSLEY (for Mr. FITZGERALD) proposed an amendment to the bill (S. 777) to require the Department of Agriculture to establish an electronic filing and retrieval system to enable the public to file all required paperwork electronically with the Department and to have access to public information on farm programs, quarterly trade, economic, and production reports, and other similar information; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Freedom to E-File Act".

SEC. 2. ELECTRONIC FILING AND RETRIEVAL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, in accordance with subsection (c), the Secretary of Agriculture (referred to in this Act as the "Secretary") shall, to the maximum extent practicable, establish an Internet-based system that enables agricultural producers to access all forms of the agencies of the Department of Agriculture specified in subsection (b).

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The agencies referred to in subsection (a) are—

(1) the Farm Service Agency;

(2) the Rural Utilities Service;

(3) the Rural Housing Service;

(4) the Rural Business-Cooperative Service;

and

(5) the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

(1) provide a method by which agricultural producers may—

(A) download forms from the Internet; and

(B) submit completed forms via electronic facsimile, mail, or similar means;

(2) redesign forms of the agencies of the Department of Agriculture by incorporating into the forms user-friendly formats and self-help guidance materials.

(d) PROGRESS REPORTS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report that describes the progress made toward implementing the Internet-based system required under this section.

SEC. 3. ACCESSING INFORMATION AND FILING OVER THE INTERNET.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, in accordance with subsection (b), the Secretary shall expand implementation of the Internet-based system established under section 2 by enabling agricultural producers to access and file all forms and, at the option of the Secretary, selected records and information of the agencies of the Department specified in section 2(b).

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall ensure that an agricultural producer is able—

(1) to file electronically or in paper form, at the option of the agricultural producer, all forms required by agencies of the Department specified in section 2(b);

(2) to file electronically or in paper form, at the option of the agricultural producer, all documentation required by agencies of the Department specified in section 2(b) and determined appropriate by the Secretary; and

(3) to access information concerning farm programs, quarterly trade, economic, and production reports, and other similar production agriculture information that is readily available to the public in paper form.

SEC. 4. FEDERAL CROP INSURANCE CORPORATION AND RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than December 1, 2000, the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation and the Risk Management Agency shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a plan, that is consistent with this Act, to allow agricultural producers to—

(1) obtain, over the Internet, from approved insurance providers all forms and other information concerning the program under the jurisdiction of the Corporation and Agency in which the agricultural producer is a participant; and

(2) file electronically all paperwork required for participation in the program.

(b) ADMINISTRATION.—The plan shall—

(1) conform to sections 2(c) and 3(b); and

(2) prescribe—

(A) the location and type of data to be made available to agricultural producers;

(B) the location where agricultural producers can electronically file their paperwork; and

(C) the responsibilities of the applicable parties, including agricultural producers, the Risk Management Agency, the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, approved insurance providers, crop insurance agents, and brokers.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than December 1, 2001, the Federal Crop Insurance

Corporation and the Risk Management Agency shall complete implementation of the plan submitted under subsection (a).

SEC. 5. CONFIDENTIALITY.

In carrying out this Act, the Secretary—

(1) may not make available any information over the Internet that would otherwise not be available for release under section 552 or 552a of title 5, United States Code; and

(2) shall ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that the confidentiality of persons is maintained.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, November 4, 1999, in open session, to consider the nominations of Mr. Alphonso Maldon, Jr. to be assistant Secretary of Defense, Force Management Policy, and Mr. John Veroneau to be Assistant Secretary of Defense, Legislative Affairs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, November 4, 1999, at 9:30 a.m. on local competition in the voice and data marketplaces.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 4, 1999, at 10 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to hold two hearings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask, unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, November 4, 1999, at 9:30 a.m. to conduct a joint hearing with the House Committee on Resources on S. 1586, the Indian Land Consolidation Act Amendments of 1999; and S. 1315, to permit the leasing of oil and gas rights on Navajo allotted lands.

The hearing will be held in room 106, Dirksen Senate Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, November 4, 1999, at 10 a.m., in Dirksen Room 226, to conduct a markup.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.